

Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

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E.O.: 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, NI

SUBJ: LABOR UNITY: PROGRESS REPORT

REF: LAGOS 9240

SUMMARY: LABOR UNITY TALKS CONTINUING, WITH INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION ISSUE APPARENTLY SOLVED BUT LEADERSHIP ISSUE UNRESOLVED. NEWLY NAMED NIGERIAN LABOUR CONGRESS WAS ABLE SUBMIT UNIFIED COMMENTS TO FMG ON UDOJI REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS AND THIS HAS CAUSED RENEWED HOPES FOR EVENTUAL SUCCESS OF MERGER TALKS. STATE OF FLUX OBVIOUS IN UNION MOVEMENT, AND IF LEADERSHIP ISSUE DOES CAUSE FAILURE OF NEGOTIATIONS, BELIEVE NEW UNION ALLIANCES MAY RESULT. END SUMMARY.

1. NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN NATION'S VARIOUS CENTRAL LABOR BODIES AND INDEPENDENT UNIONS ON POSSIBLE MERGER INTO SINGLE NATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION HAVE CONTINUED DURING PAST MONTH. IN MID-OCTOBER, 50-MAN STEERING COMMITTEE MET TO REVIEW SITUATION AND APPOINTED TWO 17-MEMBER SUBCOMMITTEES TO PREPARE DRAFT CONSTITUTION AND TO REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS OF UDOJI REPORT. WHILE FIRST COMMITTEE CONTINUES ITS EFFORTS, SECOND SUBCOMMITTEE HAS COMPLETED ITS WORK AND HAS SUBMITTED

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TRADE UNION COMMENTS TO FMG. COMMITTEE AGREED NAME NEW

ORGANIZATION NIGERIAN LABOUR CONGRESS (NLC). NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MID-NOVEMBER TO CONSIDER FIRST DRAFT OF CONSTITUTION, STRUCTURE OF WHICH IS EXPECTED TO POSE NO MAJOR PROBLEMS.

2. ACCORDING TO TRADE UNION CONTACTS, ONLY REAL PROBLEM REMAINING TO BE SOLVED, SUPPOSEDLY BY STEERING COMMITTEE, CONCERNS DELEGATIONS OF LEADERSHIP POSITION IN NLC. NUMBER OF FORMULAS HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED BUT NO DECISION YET MADE. ON PROBLEM OF INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION, A POINT ON WHICH NUMBER OF PREVIOUS MERGER ATTEMPTS HAVE FOUNDERED, WE UNDERSTAND TENTATIVE AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED UNDER WHICH NLC WOULD CONTINUE TO HONOR EXISTING AFFILIATIONS FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS. ENTIRE QUESTION WOULD THEN BE RECONSIDERED.

3. NEGOTIATIONS HAVE NOT PROCEEDED WITHOUT USUAL NUMBER OF PROBLEMS. FOR EXAMPLE, ULC GENERAL SECRETARY OBEYEMI ISSUED PRESS STATEMENT NOVEMBER 1 THREATENING TO WITHDRAW ULC FROM MERGER TALKS. THIS FOLLOWED PRESS STORY OCTOBER 28 IN WHICH GIST OF NLC'S COMMENTS TO FMG ON UDOJI REPORT WERE REVEALED. STORY CONTAINED PICTURE OF ULC PRESIDENT KALTUNGO, WITH CAPTION AS NEWLY SELECTED NLC PRESIDENT. FOLLOWING DAY FMG CALLED SEVERAL UNION OFFICIALS IN FOR PRIVATE BUT SEVERE VERBAL LASHING FOR LEAKING UNION COMMENTS TO PRESS, CLAIMING THIS SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZED FMG EFFORTS TO CONTAIN ANY INFLATIONARY TRENDS WHICH MIGHT RESULT FROM UDOJI REPORT. IN HIS PRESS STATEMENT, OBEYEMI CHARGED PUBLICATION OF NLC COMMENTS COUPLED WITH PICTURE OF KALTUNGO WAS CALCULATED ATTEMPT TO TARNISH ULC WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEAKING SECRETS, AND WAS EFFORT TO DESTROY MERGER TALKS. CONTINUATION THIS TYPE OF ACTIVITY, HE STATED, COULD CAUSE ULC TO WITHDRAW FROM TALKS. HIS CHARGE HAS CAUSED SOME CONSTERNATION AMONG UNION LEADERS.

COMMENT: NUMBER OF YOUNGER UNION LEADERS REMAIN CONVINCED OF NECESSITY FOR MERGER TO SUCCEED AND GIVE IMPRESSION THEY ARE WILLING TO IGNORE ESTABLISHED UNION LEADERS IN BOTH ULC AND NTUF IF THEY INTERFERE WITH MERGER. WHOLE LABOR SCENE IS IN OBVIOUS STATE OF FLUX, AND WHILE SINGLE CENTRAL LABOR BODY MAY NOT NECESSARILY EMERGE IT IS OBVIOUS NEW ALLIANCES COULD RESULT. SUCCESS OF JOINT UNION EFFORT IN DRAFTING COMMENTS FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FMG ON UDOJI REPORT APPEARS TO HAVE GIVEN MERGER TALKS NEW VIGOR AND MAY HAVE HELPED OVERCOME SOME PROBLEMS USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH PAST MERGER EFFORTS. LEADERSHIP ISSUE IS NOW KEY TO MERGER'S EVENTUAL SUCCESS. WHILE LEFT-WING UNIONISTS ARE PROBABLY WILLING COMPROMISE TO A GREAT EXTENT ON THIS ISSUE, THEY MUST WANT TO KEEP SOME KEY POSITIONS FOR THEMSELVES FOR FUTURE USE AND AS INDICATION OF STRENGTH THEIR FOLLOWING IN UNION MOVEMENT. DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS ON THIS POINT

COULD TAKE CONSIDERABLE TIME AND IT APPEARS UNLIKELY NLC,
IF IT ACTUALLY COMES INTO BEING, COULD FORMALLY GET STARTED
BEFORE EARLY 1975.
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